



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

SHULLAM'S REPORT OF THE BURNING OF SAMUEL ZARZA: A LEGEND BASED ON A NAME.

THE deplorable anecdote, by which Samuel Shullam, in his edition of *Juchasin*, made up for Zacuto's brevity in the account of Samuel Zarza, has more than once led to the erroneous assumption, that the Synagogue in the Middle Ages delivered up those who professed heretical opinion to the stake¹. An assertion of such moment has never been based on more frivolous grounds than this. The story of the burning of Samuel Zarza is, in all its details, so untenable, so full of contradictions, so palpably untrue, both in regard to internal and external evidence, that it should no longer be repeated, or earnestly considered.

Samuel Shullam was credulous enough to take in the story that no less a person than R. Isaac Campanton had on his conscience the crime of having delivered up Samuel Zarza to execution. The terrible catastrophe was believed to have been brought about by so frivolous a circumstance that it is downright ridiculous. It is said that at a wedding, at which Campanton, Isaac de Leon, Isaac Aboab, and Samuel Valenzi were present², when the marriage contract was being read, Samuel Zarza, at the pronunciation of the words "In the year X of the creation of the world," touched his beard, and exclaimed: "and ever so many more³;" in order to demonstrate in this way the doctrine of the eternity of the world. Campanton, furious at this profanation, cried out: "Why does not the S'neh [=Zarza] burn? Zarza must be burned." Thereupon, Zarza was given up to the authorities, and burned at the stake.

Now the narrative is clearly absurd on the face of it, because the hero and his victim were separated by a whole century. Zarza, according to the distinct evidence of his own works⁴, concluded the most important of the latter—the commentary *Mekor Chayim* to the Pentateuch, and the commentary *Michlol Yofi* to the Agada—at Palencia, during the period of the terrible sufferings of the Jews of

¹ Cf. Salomon Reinach, in the *Revue d'Anthropologie*, XVIII (1889), pp. 142-151.

² All these are included in Shullam's words, כל הרבנים דהא, כל הרבנים דהא.

³ וכמה וכמה גם כן, or rather כך = וכ"כ ג"כ. In Filipowsky's edition of *Juchasin*, p. 226, the words were turned into יב"ב ג"כ.

⁴ Cf. the epilogue to *Mekor Chayim* in שבט יהודה, ed. M. Wiener, p. 131 sq., and in the preface to *Michlol Yofi*, in B. Beer's *Philosophie der Juden*, p. 80 sq.

Castile and Leon, in 1368 and 1369. Isaac ibn Alchadeb¹, Zarza's admirer and eulogist, proves that Samuel Zarza must have been, about the year 1370, long past the ordinary span of life. It is probable that Menachem ben Zerach, in his *Encyclopedia*, had already made use of Zarza's works². His compatriot and contemporary Shemtob ben Jehudah ibn Mayor, of Briviesca, referred to him, about the year 1384, as already deceased³. Isaac Campanton, however, whose fame was carried by the exiles of Spain and Portugal to their new homes, was buried in Peñafel in 1463, according to the unanimous evidence of the chronographers⁴. The other alleged witnesses of Zarza's senseless exclamation even reach into the period of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. For Samuel Valenzi and Isaac de Leon died about 1490⁵, and Isaac Aboab died in 1493 in Portugal, seven months after his exile from Spain⁶.

But apart from these palpable contradictions, the whole narrative is full of silly inventions and pure impossibilities. An author, who is wont to express his opinions in folio volumes, has no necessity of demonstrating them by the hairs of his beard, and to vent them in such a manner. The impression we gain of Zarza's character from his own writings does not accord at all with such frivolity, and is sufficient to prove the fictitious nature of the story. Samuel Zarza, in spite of the devotion evinced by him to Abraham ibn Ezra and Maimuni, Samuel ibn Tibbon, and Shemtob ibn Falaquera, and even to Isaac Albalag⁷ and Mose Narboni⁸, displays a painful scrupulousness in regard to all questions of tradition. Even when reproducing allegorical explanations from other commentators, he never tires of apologizing, and of every time insisting upon the literal sense of the passages in question. The doctrine of the creation of the world *ex nihilo* was especially precious to him; he considered it to be an irrefragable truth, and at the very commencement of his commentary

¹ Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*, p. 423 b; M. Steinschneider, *Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters*, p. 556, n. 121.

² Kaufmann, *Die Sinne*, p. 87, n. 15.

³ Schiller-Szinessy, *Catalogue of Cambridge*, p. 155.

⁴ Zacuto, l. c., 226; *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles*, ed. Neubauer, I, 99, l. 6—(Joseph b. Zaddik)—ר"ג must, evidently, be read, instead of ר"ב, as given correctly, *ibid.*, 110, l. 6 from the bottom (Abraham ibn Salomo). Cf. also p. 107.

⁵ Zacuto, p. 226, says: קורם הגירוש כמה שנים; Abraham b. Salomo, l. c., 113, l. 9: כמו שחי שנים או יותר קורם הגירוש.

⁶ Zacuto, l. c.

⁷ Cf. *Mekor Chayim*, 8a, and 115 d.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 6a, 14 b, and *passim*.

to the Pentateuch¹, he breaks a lance in its defence. And that this devout man, who was always anxious to avoid giving offence, should have taken the opportunity of a wedding to scout in public, and in the presence of most pious rabbis, the dogma of the creation of the world, is absurd.

But Samuel Shullam is, besides, guilty of the offence of having imputed to a man of so exalted a character as R. Isaac Campanton the crime of denouncing a co-religionist, and delivering him up to death. The horror of informers had taken too deep a hold on the hearts of the Jews, the punishment inflicted on informants—particularly in Spain—was too heavy², and the abhorrence of all contact with the Inquisition too strong even among the lowest Jews of Spain, to make it possible to credit one of the best sons of Spanish Jewry with having denounced in so dastardly a manner, and given up to the stake, a learned and respected co-religionist. It is a sin to believe it, and it is, at the same time, a gross violation of historical truth.

But the very circumstance that it took nearly two hundred years for the story to make its first appearance, is proof enough that it is fictitious. Not a single one of the Spanish chronographers, to whom, besides Zacuto, we must now also reckon Joseph ben Zaddik of Arevalo, and Abraham b. Samuel of Torrutiel, mentions with a word the frightful slander of Samuel Shullam's. Abraham Zacuto has hardly anything to say about Samuel Zarza. It is evident that he did not know the *Mekor Chayim*; at least, he makes no mention of it; he had, probably, not seen the *Michlol Yofi* either, although he names it; otherwise he would not have made Zarza a contemporary of Albo, in spite of Zarza's statement, at the beginning of the work, that the latter was concluded in the year 1369³. The other Spanish Chronicles do not know Zarza at all. Passages of other authors, in which Zarza is mentioned as an adherent of the doctrine of the eternity of the world, can hardly be adduced as arguments for the probability of Shullam's story. Isaac Abravanel⁴ mentions him as such; but probably only because he found that Zarza had quoted Isaac Albalag. Gedaliah ibn Jachja⁵, and Manasseh ben Israel⁶, simply copied the fable of Zarza's execution at the stake from Samuel

¹ Preface: הנה קצת (= one of) הדוכמים שם פסוקי התורה הראשונים מבראשית בורות ואולי היה מוציא מפני זה הפסוקים מששם לא היה אצלו בתורה באור לחרוש הנלום וזה מה שאין ראוי להזמיתו על לב.

² Cf. Kaufmann, *JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW*, VIII, 217 sqq.

³ *Juchasin*, ed. Filipowski, p. 226, מכלל יופי, עשה מכלל יופי.

⁴ In his commentary to Joshua.

⁵ ואומר ס' יוחסין שנשרף בקרש ה: ed. Venice, f. 62 b.

⁶ *De Creatione*, p. 9. Cf. Reinach, l. c., 147, n. 2.

Shullam's narrative. On the other hand, David Ganz had enough common sense and taste to mention—erroneously indeed—Samuel Zarza as having lived in 1492, without any allusion to the fable connected with his name¹. Jacob Emden also names Zarza as one who heretically professed the doctrine of the eternity of the world², but he most probably only followed Isaac Abravanel's statement.

But what then was the origin of the fable, which was only reproduced, but had not been invented, by Samuel Shullam? It is of importance to trace it, because the respect for the written and printed word always militates against a simple refutation and rejection. Even a critic like J. H. Weiss could not make up his mind to refuse all credence to this fable³.

The origin of the narrative becomes clear, once we more closely consider the name of the victim. We see at once that it is a case of a legend founded upon the peculiarity of a name, of which class the history of legendary lore offers many instances. Samuel Zarza informs us that his name, which in Spanish denotes a "thorny bush," caused him to be called in Hebrew "Ibn S'neh⁴." The addition of the benedictory formula for deceased persons after his name, in Ibn Mayor's commentary of Ibn Ezra, shows that he had been dead a long time a natural death, and his name hardly remembered at all, when Isaac Abravanel branded him with the heretical stigma of having believed in the eternity of the world. What could be more obvious than to attach to the man whose name reminded of the thorny bush, the fable that he was burned like the bush, as a well-deserved punishment for his heresy? In the interest of the pun, Isaac Campanton was credited with the cynicism of having so frivolously misapplied the biblical text, Exod. iii. 3 "Why does the bush not burn?" "Why is not Zarza condemned to the stake, and delivered up to the Inquisition for that purpose?" Isaac Campanton's name was remembered long after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. Abraham ibn Megas⁵, the body-physician of Soliman the Great, and a contem-

¹ רנ"ב, I, צמח דור.

² האדורים חרשעים הפלוסופים היוונים וההולכים : 264 a, ed. Altona, f. 264 a, מנחם עז. בעקבותם כאלגלג כרכה וחבריהם הלצים המחזרים שר". האומרים מה שדי כי נעבוד המליכו עליהם הפע ככל הולך על ארבע.

³ דור דור ודורשיו, V, 235, n. 8.

⁴ ואני צייר הצעירים וקצן שבקבנים שמואל : *Mekor Chayim*. In the poem, before his introduction, he signs his name כנה שמואל בן כנה, and in the next poem צרפה שמואל. Isaac Alchadeb calls him at the end of *Mekor Chayim* כנה לר' שמואל ו'ל, and Shemtob ibn Mayor calls him כנה שמואל בן כנה and צרפה ו'ל. On Joseph Kahan, vid. Wolf, *Bibl. Hebr.*, I, 9, no. 941, and III, no. 1881.

⁵ Cf. Zunz, *Ges. Schriften*, I, 184, no. 84.

porary of Shullam's, still has many things to relate about R. Isaac Campanton¹, harmless things indeed, wonders of acumen, but always things of such a nature as to prove how that name remained alive, both in the imagination of the people, and in legendary tradition.

The name of Zarza served already as a plaything to his contemporary and admirer Isaac Alchadeb. But with the latter the "thorny bush" was symbolically applied in quite a different way. Filled with admiration at the zeal with which Zarza was at pains to reconcile Agada with philosophy, tradition with rationality, and how he dealt comprehensively with the natural and mental sciences, he represents "the thorny bush" of Palencia also as appearing in fire, but, like the bush of Moses, without being consumed².

DAVID KAUFMANN.

JEDIDIAH OF RIMINI; OR, AMADEO DI MOÏSE DE RECANATI.

THE history of the literature and culture of the Jews of Italy is, in spite of the apparent wealth of documentary resources, still in its infancy. Men who were prominent in their days by achievements in various directions, who were in advance of their age, and devoted themselves to pursuits which should have secured for them everlasting fame, have become mere vague shadows, of whom we have only bibliographical, but no historical knowledge. The investigation of the printed works and MSS. will have to be carried on in conjunction with that of the archives and epitaphs, in order to connect again the disjointed members, revive the shadows, so that from mere names and books we may become acquainted with the persons of their authors. One of those who still await such services at the hands of historical research is the Talmudist, poet, and translator Amadeo of Rimini, or, as he is called in Hebrew, Jedidiah b. Mose of Recanate, who flourished in Italy in the second half of the sixteenth century, but whose literary products are so scattered about in various manuscripts that all recollection of him was lost and, as it were, dismembered.

The first literary trace we gain of him is of the year 1566, when

¹ כבוד אלהים, f. 48 b.

² At the end of *Mekor Chayim*: . וישא משלו ויפתח פירו . מכלל יופי מציון . ומעירני עלי שוכני סנה . הש' בכל פיות מענה כי אשר אותי מכח לפנעל משה . בוצר באש משה . לרוב זורוהו וחורו בכל דבר שבזע ומשכח . אך הסנה איננו אוכל